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SUBJECT: NORWAY PROPOSES HIGH NORTH SEMINAR

Classified By: Political / Economic Counselor Mike Hammer
for reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (SBU) Following up on the pitch Foreign Minister Stoere made to A/S Fried on continuing the U.S.-Norway High North dialogue, the Norwegians are proposing a meeting on the High North at the Department in late May / early June. The MFA envisions a half-day seminar where they will present on how energy, energy security, environment, transportation and fisheries issues converge in the High North. They would then like to hear the Department's views and define areas of mutual interest for further engagement.

¶2. (SBU) While Norwegians want energy to be the focus, they want to reinforce their view that the High North is a area where several issues beyond energy converge. They would like Department and other agency experts on environment, transportation, and fisheries present for the duration of the discussions to avoid compartmentalizing issues.

¶3. (SBU) Ideally, Norwegians would like to use the meeting to launch working level discussions among a core group of individuals that would continue beyond this session. The Norwegian delegation would be led by the MFA and would include members of the Ministries of Petroleum and Energy, Transportation, and Fisheries and Coastal Affairs. U.S. representation would presumably be from State and DOE. Norway has conducted similar "High North" meetings with officials in London, Berlin, Paris, Ottawa, and the EU.

¶4. (C) Comment: While the Norwegians do not have the clearest sense for where they are going on the "High North" (making talks a bit nebulous) we believe that it is important that we engage them. Norway is interested in our views on the High North and they are keen to continue discussions with us on a region that matters very much to them and is becoming increasingly important to us. Energy and energy security are natural starting points as the Norwegian government has made the High North a strategic priority and given that we have an interest in how Norway develops its potentially vast hydrocarbon resources in the Barents. End Comment

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